118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. ______

To prohibit any official action to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Wilson of South Carolina introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ____________________

A BILL

To prohibit any official action to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT.

(a) CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT.—


(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “with respect to a foreign person if the President determines that the foreign person, on or after such date of enactment, knowingly engages in an activity described in paragraph (2).” and inserting “with respect to a foreign person that the President determines—”

“(A) knowingly engages, on or after such date of enactment, in an activity described in paragraph (2);

“(B) is an adult family member of a foreign person described in subparagraph (A); or

“(C) is owned or controlled by a foreign person described in subparagraph (A) or (B).”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:
“(i) the Government of Syria (including any entity owned or controlled by the Government of Syria), a senior political figure of the Government of Syria, a member of the People’s Assembly of Syria, or a senior foreign political figure (as such term is defined in section 101.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations) of the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party of Syria, including any such senior foreign political figure who is—

“(I) a member of the Central Command, Central Committee, or Auditing and Inspection Committee of such Party; or

“(II) a leader of a local branch of such Party;”;

(II) in clause (ii), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(III) in clause (iii), by striking the semicolon and inserting “; or”;

and

(IV) by adding at the end the following new clause:
“(iv) Syria Arab Airlines, Cham Wings, or any foreign person owned or controlled by Syria Arab Airlines or Cham Wings;”;

(ii) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) knowingly sells or provides aircraft or spare aircraft parts—

“(i) to the Government of Syria; or

“(ii) for or on behalf of the Government of Syria to any foreign person operating in an area directly or indirectly controlled by the Government of Syria or foreign forces associated with the Government of Syria;”;

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) by striking “construction or engineering services” and inserting “financial, construction, or engineering services”; and

(II) by striking the closing period and inserting a semicolon; and
(v) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(F) knowingly engages in or directs—

“(i) the diversion of goods (including agricultural commodities, food, medicine, and medical devices), or any international humanitarian assistance, intended for the people of Syria; or

“(ii) the dealing in proceeds from the sale or resale of such diverted goods or international humanitarian assistance, as the case may be;

“(G) knowingly, directly or indirectly, engages in or attempts to engage in, the seizure, confiscation, theft, or expropriation for personal gain or political purposes of property, including real property, in Syria or owned by a citizen of Syria;

“(H) knowingly, directly or indirectly, engages in or attempts to engage in a transaction or transactions for or with such seized, confiscated, stolen, or expropriated property described in subparagraph (G); or

“(I) knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support to a for-
eign person engaging in an activity described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (H).”;

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(4) TRANSACTION DEFINED.—For purposes of the determination required by subparagraph (a)(2)(A), the term ‘transaction’ includes in-kind transactions.

“(5) SIGNIFICANT TRANSACTION CLARIFIED.—In this section, the term ‘significant transaction’ includes any natural gas, electricity, or other energy-related transaction, without regard to whether such transaction was authorized by a license or regulation issued prior the date of the enactment of this paragraph pursuant to section 203 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) CONGRESSIONAL REQUESTS.—Not later than 30 days after receiving a request from the chairman and ranking member of one of the appropriate congressional committees with respect to whether a foreign person knowingly engages in an activity described in subsection (a)(2) the President shall—
“(1) make the determination specified in subsection (a)(1) with respect to that foreign person; and

“(2) submit to such chairman and ranking member that submitted the request a report with respect to such determination that includes a statement of whether the President has imposed or intends to impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to that foreign person.”.

(b) Removal of Exception Relating to Importation of Goods.—The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended—

(1) by striking section 7434; and

(2) by redesignating sections 7435 through 7438 as sections 7434 through 7437, respectively.

(c) Determination With Respect to Syria Trust for Development.—

(1) Determination.—Not later than 120 days after the enactment of this Act, the President shall—

(A) determine whether the nonprofit organization chaired by Asma Al-Assad, the First Lady of Syria, known as the “Syria Trust for Development” meets the criteria for the imposi-
tion of sanctions under section 7412(a) of the
Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019,
as amended by subsection (a); and

(B) submit to the appropriate congressional committees such determination, including
a justification for the determination.

(2) FORM.—The determination under paragraph (1)(B) shall be submitted in unclassified form,
but the justification specified in such paragraph may
be included in a classified annex. The unclassified
determination shall be made available on a publicly
available website of the Federal government.

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
TEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appro-
priate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services, the
Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Com-
mittee on Financial Services of the House of
Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services, the
Committee on Foreign Relations and the Com-
mittee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
of the Senate.
(d) FINDINGS ON APPLICABILITY WITH RESPECT TO
SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES, CHAM WINGS AIRLINES, AND
RELATED ENTITIES.—Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2013, the President identified Syrian Arab Airlines as a blocked instrumentality or controlled entity of the Government of Syria and concurrently sanctioned Syrian Arab Airlines pursuant to Executive Order 13224 for acting for or on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force of Iran.

(2) In 2016, the President sanctioned Syria-based Cham Wings Airlines pursuant to Executive Order 13582 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, the Government of Syria and Syrian Arab Airlines.

(3) Section 7412(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note) mandates the application of sanctions against any foreign person that “knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support to, or knowingly engages in a significant transaction with...a foreign person subject to sanctions pursuant to the International Emergency Economic
Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) with respect to Syria or any other provision of law that imposes sanctions with respect to Syria,”, which applies to airport service providers outside of Syria.

(e) S EVERABILITY.—If any provision of this Act, or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is found to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, or the application of that provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF RECOGNITION OF ASSAD REGIME.

(a) S TATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) not to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad due to the Assad regime’s ongoing crimes against the Syrian people, including failure to meet the criteria outlined in section 7431(a) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019;

(2) to actively oppose recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar Al-Assad, including by fully implementing the mandatory primary and secondary sanctions in the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894; and
(3) to use the full range of authorities, including those provided under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894, to deter reconstruction activities in areas under the control of Bashar al-Assad.

(b) Prohibition.—In accordance with subsection (a), no Federal official or employee may take any action, and no Federal funds may be made available, to recognize or otherwise imply, in any manner, United States recognition of Bashar al-Assad or any Government in Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad.

SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY STRATEGY TO COUNTER NORMALIZATION WITH ASSAD REGIME.

(a) Report and Strategy Required.—

(1) Submission.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for a period not to exceed 5 years, the Secretary of State (in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies) shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report and strategy to describe and counter actions taken or planned by foreign governments to normalize, engage with, or upgrade polit-
ica, diplomatic, or economic ties with the regime led
by Bashar al-Assad in Syria (in this section referred
to as the “Assad regime”).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The elements of the report
under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a description of violations of inter-
national law and human rights abuses com-
mitted by Bashar al-Assad, the Government of
the Russian Federation, or the Government of
Iran and progress towards justice and account-
ability for the Syrian people;

(B) a full list of diplomatic meetings at the
Ambassador level or above, between the Syrian
regime and any representative of the Govern-
ments of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates,
Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait,
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria,
Morocco, Libya, or Lebanon, respectively;

(C) a full list of transactions, including in-
vestments, grants, contracts, or donations (in-
cluding loans or other extension of credit), ex-
ceeding $50,000 in areas of Syria held by the
Assad regime by any persons from Turkey, the
United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq,
Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi
Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, or Lebanon;

(D) for each item on the list identified in subparagraph (C), a determination of whether such transaction subjects any of the parties to the transaction to sanctions under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, as amended by section 2;

(E) a description of the steps the United States is taking to actively deter recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with the Assad regime, including specific diplomatic engagements and use of economic sanctions authorized by statutes or implemented through Executive Orders, including—

(i) the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note);

(ii) the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (22 U.S.C. 2151 note);

(iii) the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8501 et seq.);

(iv) Executive Order 13894 (84 Fed. Reg. 55851; relating to blocking property
and suspending entry of certain persons
contributing to the situation in Syria);

(v) the Global Magnitsky Human
Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C.
10101 et seq.);

(vi) the Countering American Adversaries through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C.
9401 et seq.); and

(vii) the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin
Designation Act; and

(F) an assessment of how recognition or
normalization of relations by other governments
with the Assad regime impacts the national se-
curity of the United States, prospects for imple-
mentation of the United Nations Security
Council Resolution 2254, prospects for justice
and accountability for war crimes in Syria, and
the benefits derived by the Government of the
Russian Federation or the Government of Iran.

(b) SCOPE.—The initial report required by subsection
(a) shall address the period beginning on January 1, 2021,
and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, and
each subsequent report shall address the one-year period
following the conclusion of the scope of the prior report.
(c) FORM.—Each report under subsection (a) shall be submitted in an unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex. The unclassified section of such a report shall be made publicly available on a website of the United States Federal Government.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

SEC. 5. REPORTS ON MANIPULATION OF UNITED NATIONS BY ASSAD REGIME IN SYRIA.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for a period not to exceed 5 years, the Secretary of State, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of...
the Senate a report on the manipulation of the United Nations by the regime led by Bashar al-Assad in Syria (in this section referred to as the “Assad regime”), including—

(1) a description of conditions, both explicit and implicit, set by the Assad regime with respect to United Nations operations in Syria including with respect to implementing partners, hiring practices, allocation of grants and contracts, and procurement of goods and services;

(2) a description of the extent to which the United Nations has rejected or otherwise opposed any of the conditions described in paragraph (1);

(3) an identification of officials or employees of the United Nations (including funds, programs and specialized agencies of the United Nations) with ties to the Assad regime, including family ties, or persons designated for sanctions by United Nations donor countries;

(4) a full account of access restrictions imposed by the Assad regime and the overall impact on the ability of the United Nations to deliver international assistance to target beneficiaries in areas outside regime control;
(5) a description of ways in which United Nations aid improperly benefits the Assad regime and its associates in defiance of basic humanitarian principles;

(6) a description of the due diligence mechanisms and vetting procedures in place to ensure entities contracted by the United Nations to ensure goods, supplies, or services provided Syria do not have links to the Assad regime, known human rights abusers, or persons designated for sanctions by United Nations donor countries;

(7) an identification of entities affiliated with the Assad regime, including the Syria Trust for Development and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, foreign government ministries, and private corporations owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the Assad regime, that have received United Nations funding, contracts, or grants or have otherwise entered into a formalized partnership with the United Nations;

(8) an assessment of how the Assad regime sets arbitrary or punitive exchange rates to extract funding from the United Nations, as well as the total amount extracted by such means;
(9) an assessment of the degree to which the various forms of manipulation described in this section has resulted in compromises of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence of the United Nations; and

(10) a strategy to reduce the ability of the Assad regime to manipulate or otherwise influence the United Nations and other aid operations in Syria and ensure United States and international aid is delivered in a neutral and impartial manner consistent with basic humanitarian principles.